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PACKAGING FOR HAIR BANDS HAVING SPLIT MOUNT PANEL

Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to packaging and more particularly to packaging for retaining and displaying looped elastic hair bands.

Background of the Invention

[0002] Hair bands comprise loops of an extensible material providing for stretching and wrapping of the loop around gathered hair, to form a ponytail for example. Known packaging for displaying hair bands includes a mounting member, typically a card or panel, that receives a plurality of hair bands such that the loops defined by the bands encircle a portion of the card or panel. The receipt of the hair bands in this manner by the packaging provides for display of the plurality of hair bands in a side-by-side arrangement.

Summary of the Invention

[0003] The invention provides a packaging assembly for retaining and displaying a plurality of elastic bands each defining a closed loop. The packaging assembly includes a display member having a mount panel. The mount panel has a length and is adapted for receipt of a plurality of elastic bands defining closed loops in a side-by-side arrangement in which the closed loop of each hair band encircles the mount panel. The display member further includes a peripheral portion surrounding the mount panel.

[0004] The mount panel includes a discontinuity extending across the mount panel at an intermediate location along the length. The discontinuity divides the mount panel into first and second portions each having a first end unsupported by the display member and an

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opposite second end secured to the peripheral portion of the display member. Each of the first and second portions includes an elongated opening.

[0005] The packaging assembly includes a panel link member having a body portion and a pair of tabs extending from opposite sides of the body portion, the tabs adapted for receipt by the elongated openings in the mount panel portions. Each of the tabs includes an opening. The packaging assembly further includes an elongated flexible connector received through the opening in each of the tabs. The flexible connector includes opposite first and second ends securable together such that the flexible connector defines a closed loop. The flexible connector may also be received through the closed loop defined by at least one of the hair bands.

[0006] According to one embodiment of the invention, the first end of one of the mount panel portions includes at least one projection that interfits with a corresponding indentation formed in the first end of the other one of the mount panel portions.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0007] Figure 1 is a front elevational view of a packaging assembly according to the present invention;

[0008] Figure 2 is a front elevational view of the packaging assembly of Figure 1 from which a portion of the assembly has been removed;

[0009] Figure 3 is an exploded perspective view of the display member and panel link member of Figure 1;

[0010] Figure 4 is a rear elevational view of the packaging assembly of Figure 1;

[0011] Figure 5 is a side elevational view of the packaging assembly of Figure 1;

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[0012] Figure 6 is a rear elevational view of an alternate packaging assembly according to the invention; and

[0013] Figure 7 is a side elevational view of the packaging assembly of Figure 6.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

[0014] Referring to the drawings, where like numerals identify like elements, there is illustrated in Figure 1 a packaging assembly 10 according to the present invention including a plurality of elastic hair bands 12 supported for display. Each hair band 12 comprises a loop of extensible material that provides for stretching and wrapping of the band around a section of gathered hair, to form a ponytail for example. Hair bands made from a braided elastic material provide extensible loops that are suitable for display in the packaging assembly 10. The present invention, however, is not limited to braided elastic hair bands and can be used with loops made from any suitably elastic material.

[0015] The packaging assembly 10 includes a display member 14 having front and rear sides 16, 18. The display member 10 is preferably a rectangular card made from a foldable material such as paperboard. The rectangular display member 14 includes top and bottom ends 20, 22 and opposite sides 24, 26. The display member 14 includes a mount panel 28 that provides for receipt of a plurality of hair bands 12 for presentation in a side-by-side arrangement in the manner to be described below. The mount panel 28 is integrally formed from an interior portion of the display member 14 such that a continuous peripheral portion 30 of the display member 14 surrounds the mount panel 28. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the interior mount panel 28 is defined by a pair of elongated slots 32 that extend substantially parallel to the sides 24, 26 of the display member 14 between top and bottom ends 34, 36.

[0016] The display member 14 includes an opening 38 located in the peripheral portion 30 adjacent the top end 20. The opening 38 provides for receipt by the display member 14 of a peg or hook, of a rack display system for example, for hanging display of the packaging assembly 10.

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[0017] Referring to Figures 2 and 3, the construction of the mount panel 28 of display member 14 is shown in greater detail. As shown, the mount panel 28 includes an intermediately located discontinuity 40 that splits the mount panel into separate top and bottom halves 42, 44. The discontinuity 40 does not extend linearly across the mount panel 28 and, instead, follows a curved, undulating, path that defines interfitting projections 46 and indentations 48 at ends 50, 52 of the top and bottom halves 42, 44, respectively. The interfitting relationship between the projections 46 and indentations 48 of the top and bottom halves 42, 44 facilitates lateral stability of the split mount panel 28 when the halves are secured together in the assembled condition of the packaging assembly shown in Figure 1.

[0018] The mount panel 28 includes a pair of fold lines 54 extending across the mount panel adjacent the ends 34, 36 of the slots 32. As shown in Figure 3, folding of the top and bottom halves 42, 44 of mount panel 28 along fold lines 54 separates the interfitting ends 50, 52 of the top and bottom halves 42, 44. The separation of the ends 50, 52 provided by the folding of the mount panel halves 42, 44 creates a gap that provides for receipt of the hair bands 12 by the mounting panel 28 such that each hair band encircles one of the panel halves 42, 44. It is conceivable that the fold lines 54 could be located at a more intermediate location with respect to the mount panel 28 and still provide for separation between the interfitting ends 50, 52. Location of the fold lines 54 adjacent the slot ends 34, 36, however, facilitates loading of hair bands 12 onto the mount panel 28.

[0019] The packaging assembly 10 further includes a panel link member 56 that engages both halves 42, 44 of the mount panel 28 to join the two halves together after the plurality of hair bands 12 are loaded onto the mount panel 28. The link member 56 includes a central body portion 58 that is dimensioned to overlie a portion of both of the halves 42, 44 in a similar fashion to the connecting member of splice joint. The panel link member 56 further includes a pair of tabs 60 located at opposite ends of the central body portion 58 and extending substantially perpendicular thereto. Each of the halves 42, 44 of the mount panel 28 includes an elongated slot opening 62 dimensioned and positioned for receipt of one of the tabs 60 of the panel link member 56. The panel link member 56 is preferably made from a

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blank of paperboard, or other suitably foldable material, and folded along fold lines extending between the central body portion 58 and the opposite tabs 60.

[0020] Referring to Figures 4 and 5, the panel link member 56 engages the mount panel 28 from the front side 16 of the display member 14. The tabs 60 of the link member 56 extend between adjacent hair bands 12 to be received by the slotted openings 62 of the mount panel halves 42, 44. The engagement of the panel link member 56 to the mount panel 28, therefore, positions the central body portion 58 of the link member 56 forwardly with respect to the packaging assembly 10. This forward position of the central body portion 58 facilitates presentation of printed indicia by the panel link member 56 regarding the hair bands 12 included in the packaging assembly 10.

[0021] The packaging assembly 10 further includes a flexible connector 64 for securing the panel link member 56 to the mount panel 28 in the above-described condition in which the tabs 60 are received in the slotted openings 62 of mount panel 28. The flexible connector 64 is received through openings 66 provided in each of the tabs 60 (see Fig. 3). As shown in Figure 5, the flexible connector 64 is also received through the loop of each of the hair bands 12. In this manner, the flexible connector 64 functions to secure the plurality of hair bands 12 to each other as well as functioning to secure the link member 56 to the mount panel 28 in the engaged condition shown in the figures. The flexible connector 64 includes barbs 68 spaced along the length of the connector. A first end 70 of the flexible connector 64 is received by a one-way locking mechanism 74 secured to an opposite second end 72 of the flexible connector 64. The engagement between the opposite ends 70, 72 of the connector 64 forms a closed loop from a portion of the connector, as shown in Figure 5 for example.

[0022] The locking mechanism 74 includes a tubular member 76 having internal catch members, per se known, adapted to permit passage of the barbs 68 of the connector 64 in one direction while preventing a return passage of the barbs through the tubular member 76 in the opposite direction. Once the barbs 68 have passed the one-way locking mechanism 74 to form a closed loop, the loop cannot be opened without cutting the connector 64. The panel

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link member 56 and the flexible connector 64, therefore, combine to form a hair band securing assembly.

[0023] Referring to Figures 6 and 7, there is shown an alternate packaging assembly 78 according to the invention. The packaging assembly 78 includes a display member 14 having a split mount panel 28 similar in construction to that of packaging assembly 10 for supporting a plurality of hair bands 12. The packaging assembly 78 also includes a panel link member 56 having a central body portion 58 and opposite tabs 60 similar in construction to those of packaging assembly 10 to overlie and engage the mount panel halves 42, 44. The packaging assembly 78 includes a flexible connector 80 engaging the panel link member 56 to form therewith a hair band securing assembly for securing the panel link member 56 to the mount panel 28 of display member 14 in the engaged condition shown in Figures 6 and 7. In a similar fashion to packaging assembly 10, the flexible connector 80 of packaging assembly 78 includes barbs 68 and a one-way locking mechanism 74.

[0024] The packaging assembly 78 differs from the packaging assembly 10 of Figures 1-5 in the manner in which the flexible connector 80 is engaged to the other components of the packaging assembly 78. As best seen in Figure 7, the flexible connector 80 of packaging assembly 78 is not received through the loops defined by the plurality of hair bands and, instead, only engages the tabs 60 of the panel link member 56. The direct connection between the panel link member 56 and the flexible connector 80 provides for a more compact assembly, as seen by comparing Figures 5 and 7. The flexible connector 80 of packaging assembly 78 also defines a smaller loop compared to the flexible connector 64 of packaging assembly 10 because the engagement of the connector is limited to the tabs 60 of the panel link member 56. This provides for a tighter connection for the packaging assembly 78 in which potential play between the panel link member 56 and the split mount panel 28 is limited.

It is contemplated that the panel link member can be attached to the mount panel through various other means. For example, the tabs could be adhesively attached to the mount panel portions. Alternately, the tabs may include lateral projections on their respective

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ends that are flexibly bent to pass the ends through holes in the mount panel portions. The lateral tabs when extended would then prevent removal of the panel link member.